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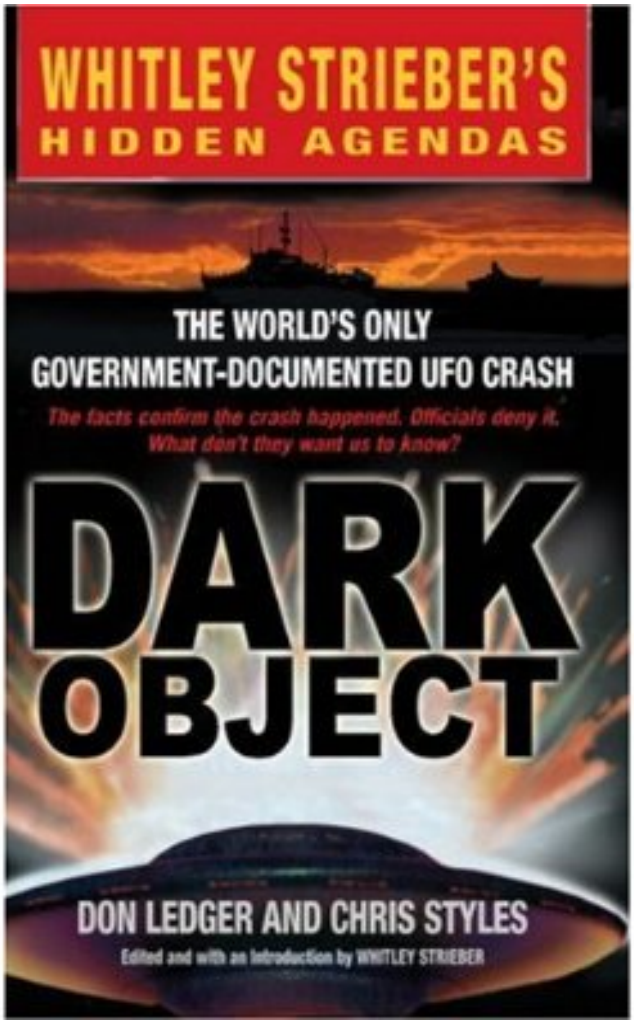

DARK OBJECT

THE WORLD'S ONLY GOVERNMENT-DOCUMENTED UFO CRASH

BY DON LEDGER AND CHRIS STYLES

INTRODUCTION BY WHITLEY STRIEBER

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DEDICATION

The authors would like to dedicate this work to all UFO witnesses, in recognition of their courage in coming forward and sharing their observations and convictions, sometimes at great personal risk.

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INTRODUCTION
by Whitley Strieber

The Shag Harbor incident is something totally unexpected: a UFO case so flawlessly documented that it must have happened. But it is hardly known, even among UFO investigators. Perhaps it has been discreetly covered up. Perhaps it has fallen through the cracks.
Either way, Don Ledger and Chris Styles have spent years working with this profoundly convincing and important story, and in this book they offer the most complete and authoritative account of the event that has ever been attempted.

Did a spacecraft from another world plunge into the cold northern waters of Shag Harbor on an October night in 1967?

The authors offer the most convincing evidence that has ever been presented for a UFO crash. They actually prove that the event took place, and they do it using government documents.

The documents in the appendix of this book are only four of the many official reports that were discovered by Styles and Ledger. They reveal that the sighting of a UFO by local fisherman Leo Mersey was actually taken so seriously by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that they filed an official report. They took the sighting report of two brothers, Lawrence Charles Smith and Norman Eugene Smith, equally seriously, as is evident from the report they filed based on their testimony.

There were reports of mysterious lights all over the Shag Harbor area, and extensive official interviews of witnesses. Indeed, concern was so strong at high levels within the Canadian government that a Royal Canadian Air Force discussion of the incident suggests an underwater investigation of the site.

The crash took place, without a doubt, and the government took it very seriously indeed, as the documents in the appendix demonstrate. Indeed, if this had been a crash of anything except a UFO, the fact would have been duly noted and a search would have been initiated for survivors. Instead, a period of confusion followed, and secrecy so intense that even years later Ledger and Styles were tailed by police after they took pictures of the area where the incident took place.

Why would this be? If an unknown craft definitely crashed - and this seems impossible to refute - then why was the official reaction so strange? To understand this it is necessary to understand first that the human response to the UFO phenomenon is extremely strange and distorted.

For example, the documents referred to in this book prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Canadian government knew for certain that something unknown crashed into Shag Harbor. But the

official response to the crash, of first doing nothing and then refusing to confirm anything, is wildly inappropriate.

That the object was not any sort of secret aircraft is made clear by the witness testimony of Captain Pierre Charbonneau, pilot of Air Canada Flight 305. He appears to have been the first witness to the object, which he saw from his plane. He described the object as orange and rectangular in shape, followed by a string of smaller lights. The object appeared to be huge.

An astonishing incident then occurred: there was an explosion near the large object. Another explosion took place a few moments later, then the trail of lights began some strange maneuvers.

This sighting alone would have entered the annals of UFO history, as it appeared to show some kind of accident or battle among the strange objects. But that was only the beginning of this incredible incident.

Since it led, a short time later, to a crash that was witnessed by multiple parties and even openly admitted by the government to have involved a UFO, one would think that there would have been headlines worldwide. Aliens hadn't exactly landed, but they had certainly crashed.

Instead, the Incident was quietly filed away.

On the surface what happened at Shag Harbor in October of 1967 is straightforward enough: a large object that had been seen, both by ground observers and pilots, crossing the sky in apparent distress went crashing into the water in full view of a substantial number of other witnesses. Strange foam and odd debris were sighted. The incident was reported to the police, the military investigated, and government documents openly acknowledged that the incident involved a UFO. Divers brought up material, again in full view of witnesses.

What is not so straightforward is that the government never released any information about what was found beneath the dark waters of Shag Harbor.

The government response became extremely strange and secretive, and very different from what it would have been if this had been an aircraft. There was no extended search-and-rescue operation, not in any ordinary sense. There was never any explanation from the government about what had happened.

The only reason that the Shag Harbor incident came to light is that Chris Styles and Don Ledger would not let the matter rest. And why should they? This is the best documented UFO crash incident that is publicly known. After October of 1967 it disappeared from memory, not returning until Ledger and Styles began their investigation and wrote this book.

A question begs to be asked: why, given that the government itself said that an event of phenomenal importance had occurred, was it simply ignored afterward and held secret? After all, this book offers documentation that the incredible has happened: an unidentified flying object of unknown origin crashed. Not only that, debris was recovered. If the object had been a meteor, there would have been no reason to conceal that fact. Witness descriptions confirm that it was not an aircraft in any ordinary sense of the word.

So what happened here? Somebody must know something, because somebody, before numerous witnesses, did indeed recover materials from the floor of the harbor. But the public hasn't been told a

word.

This is not the only UFO event that has been cloaked in extreme secrecy. It is simply the only one in which there has been a completely irrefutable admission by government authorities that a UFO was involved.

Why would the Canadian government, or the U.S. government, or any government, for that matter, be so extremely secretive about a UFO incident? In fact, why is there any secrecy about UFOs at all? The Shag Harbor incident not only proves that UFOs exist and that they can crash or at least plunge violently into the sea, it also proves that the government knows this and does nothing about it - at least, nothing that is revealed to the public. Understand, the incident proves this. Shag Harbor is no ordinary UFO case. It is the best documented and one of the best witnessed of all UFO cases.

It means that UFOs are almost certainly real. It appears also to mean, based on the responses of the Canadian government, that governments must in general be extremely secretive about them. Certainly only a few governments have ever taken any official position that UFOs are, if not real, then worth studying. These governments are Chile, Ecuador, China, and France. But none of them have ever released any definitive proof.

Dark Object certainly offers definitive proof that something very, very strange plunged into Shag Harbor in October of 1967. There is additional evidence, covered in riveting detail in this book, that it maneuvered underwater for a time.

It is a given that government secrecy exists in the UFO area. But there is a larger question here. Governments notwithstanding, why are the alleged aliens themselves so secretive? No alien has ever landed in public. No alien has ever communicated with us openly. If they are here, they are obviously able to do so if they choose.

In fact, if they are here, then it would seem that government policy and alien policy are in agreement: their presence must be kept a deep, dark secret.

There are two reasons that aliens might have a policy of secrecy. The first is that they might be doing something that we might resist if we understood it. Under this scenario they would be coercing the government into silence.

However, there might be another reason entirely. In a paper entitled "Searching for Extraterrestrial Civilizations" by T.B.H. Kuiper and M. Morris, published in Science (Vol.196, May 6,1977), the idea is put forth that an advanced extraterrestrial civilization would almost certainly be extremely secretive if they came here. The authors' reason for this is cogent. "Before a certain threshold is reached, complete contact with a superior civilization would abort further development through a culture shock effect." The authors go on to say that an advanced civilization would probably have nothing to gain from us except fresh new ideas, and that they would have to remain hidden until we had undergone a gradual process of acclimatization or risk the destruction of independent human thought.

The same thing would happen to us that happened to dozens of tribes worldwide beginning in the sixteenth century, as European technological civilization advanced. Even those that were not forcibly destroyed, such as the Aztecs and the American Indians, experienced the complete redirection of all of their intellectual, spiritual, and economic activity toward the process of obtaining western goods.

This is why, by the mid-twentieth century, anthropologists were making massive efforts to keep newly discovered tribes isolated so that they could be studied without the destruction of their cultures.

Something like this could be going on here. It would certainly explain the reticence of the aliens, and the ferocious effort that government makes to keep their secrets, knowing that the penalty for revealing their presence too soon could easily be the abandonment of their interest in mankind.

If, for whatever reason, aliens have forced the U.S. government to help them conceal themselves, it might explain what is, after all, an extremely unusual policy on its part. There is more than adequate evidence that UFOs are a genuine unknown. There is no rational basis for official secrecy, media debunking, and the rabid denial that forms a basic tenet of the modern culture of science. Any one of a hundred UFO cases could form the basis for serious investigation, and the Shag Harbor incident, with its detailed evidence of the operation, and possible failure, of technology, would be an excellent place to start.

In the early years it appeared that UFO policy might go either way. Captain Edward Ruppelt became chief of Project Grudge, which soon became Project Blue Book. Ruppelt, with a degree in aeronautical engineering, brought a high level of technical expertise to UFO investigation, and Blue Book gathered and documented many extraordinary cases from 1951 until 1959. Over this eight-year period the purpose of Blue Book gradually changed. Ruppelt, with his eager desire to solve the problem and inform the public, was replaced by one manager after another, each less inclined than the last to follow Ruppelt's original design. In 1963 the project was taken over by Major Hector Quintanilla. By this time Blue Book was nothing more than a public relations effort. In 1989, when I spoke to Major Quintanilla about his work on the project, he said that he had done nothing but gather data sent in by the public, and had no personal opinion about UFOs. He was very different from dynamic and effective officers like Ruppelt, who had made serious efforts to at least gain scientifically sound information rather than passively file reports without any real investigation.

In 1965 a massive UFO wave occurred worldwide, and it was during the three-year aftermath of this wave that the Shag Harbor incident took place on the night of October 4, 1967.

It was during this period that the air force began aggressively downplaying sightings. During a previous wave in 1952 the air force had received substantial public criticism for its inability to assert U.S. control over its own airspace, which is its most fundamental mission.

The 1965 wave brought a hardening of the air force position. Ruppelt and his approach were forgotten. The official word was that UFOs were a mystery not worth exploring.

In 1969 a disaster took place for UFO research, one from which it has never recovered. A committee of distinguished scientists had been asked by the air force to evaluate Project Blue Book. Their final report recommended that the air force drop UFO investigations. The highly respected name of Dr. Edward U. Condon carried a lot of weight, and the scientific community accepted the conclusions without ever noting that the report upon which they were based contained a substantial number of unknown or unverified sightings.

The report had vocal critics, including no less an authority on official secrets than Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter, the first director of the CIA. He was adamant that UFOs deserved serious investigation. In 1960 he had stated, "Unknown objects are operating under intelligent control."

In 1968 the Congressional Committee on Science and Astronautics held a symposium on UFOs at the request of Representative J. Edward Roush of Indiana. Representative Roush indicated that it was his belief that the Condon Committee was being improperly influenced by the air force, and that its report was a foregone conclusion.

Six distinguished scientists attended the symposium, including sociologist Dr. Robert L. Hall, prominent UFO investigator Dr. J. Allan Hynek, Dr. Carl Sagan, and Dr. James McDonald, who would eventually commit suicide, apparently over his treatment by the scientific community. Two engineers, Dr. James A. Harder and Dr. Robert M. Baker, also sat on the panel.

The symposium members stated that UFOs deserved serious study. Dr. Harder stated, "On the basis of the data and ordinary rules of evidence, as would be applied in civil or criminal courts, the physical reality of UFOs has been proved beyond a reasonable doubt."

But the conclusions of the symposium were ignored in favor of publishing the Blue Book report, by which the U.S. government officially abandoned even the collection of UFO data, let alone any research into its meaning.

From 1969 until now no case has emerged or incident transpired that might force the government to admit that, on some level, UFOs represent a genuine mystery.

The Shag Harbor incident has the potential to be such a case. The official record of this crash was made public. In addition, the whole incident was observed in detail by many witnesses. And it did not involve something as simple as a glimpse of an object plunging into the water. The approach of the object was slow and involved maneuvers that were carefully observed by trained professionals.

Indeed, as the web of witness and documentation is woven over the course of this book, it will become apparent that there is, quite simply, no better UFO case in the world. If this were the only UFO incident that had ever happened, it would represent all but certain proof that something unknown was involved.

There is, in addition, a most unusual twist to this story. It involves one of the authors of this book.

Above the dark waters of Nova Scotia on a cold October night, an orange light is observed by many different people. One of those observers leaves his home and goes racing down the street to get a better look. Transfixed, his blood racing, he ends up having a breathtaking encounter with the object at close quarters. Perhaps that is why this book is so immediate and intense.

This particular eyewitness to what became the Shag Harbor incident was Dark Object coauthor Chris Styles. So this is not only a carefully researched examination of one of the world's most compelling UFO incidents, it is also a firsthand account by a man who was there.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

There is probably only one aspect of the UFO phenomenon that the entire scientific community can

agree on. If extraterrestrial craft truly exist in a physical sense, they are, without doubt, the most exciting event in recorded history. Scientific treatments of UFO phenomena often take a dim view of the possibility that anything extraterrestrial is responsible for unexplained sightings of UFOs. The public is less sure.

A 1987 Gallup poll indicated that fifty percent of Americans are convinced that UFOs exist. Ten percent, or 26 million, claim to have had sightings or encounters. In Canada the percentages are slightly higher. Yet many scientists still do not acknowledge that the phenomenon exists. Ironically, some of those same skeptics listen with powerful radio telescopes for whispers from other star systems in a universe they believe must be teeming with life.

This book tells the story of the crash of a highly unusual object into the waters of Nova Scotia's southwest shore on the night of October 4, 1967. No aircraft were reported missing. No space junk was tracked reentering our atmosphere, and natural phenomena were ruled out due to reliable observations from the many professional and credible witnesses. The case has remained unsolved for decades, despite an extensive international search effort by the military.

The crash of the sixty-foot "Dark Object," as it is referred to in many government documents, was not taken lightly by the government. Documents discovered during the investigation of this mystery revealed Canada's hopes of retrieving and accessing alien technology. In the 1960s Ottawa had great expectations that major discoveries might be gained from UFO phenomena. Some people have told me that the Department of National Defense suffered from "Uforia."

Dark Object is also a book about the people, in and out of uniform, whose lives were affected by an encounter with a UFO on that clear dark night in October 1967. Many had to adjust their personal belief systems to include events for which they had not been prepared. Decades later they would still like some answers.

Chris Styles Halifax,
Nova Scotia

I first became involved with this project after meeting Chris Styles. His enthusiasm for this incident was and is contagious.

For many years I have been interested in the UFO phenomenon, reading just about anything I can lay my hands on. I have always been prepared to give the benefit of the doubt to those who are willing to go on the record with their sightings or encounters. But as I grow older, I've found myself growing more skeptical (Chris has already accused me of having the heart of a debunker), not necessarily of the witnesses but of what some writers are prepared to accept as solid evidence. Indeed, I am a little surprised at how easily some investigators embrace a theory or statement that helps to reinforce their own beliefs, regardless of how little evidence there is to sustain it.

I took the step about three years ago of becoming involved in the investigation of these phenomena and found it to be fascinating. The people I have had the opportunity to interview are serious individuals who, I am certain, truly believe they have had a close encounter of the first, second, third, or fourth kind. I have no reason to doubt them. But each incident has been limited by the available evidence or the number of observers on hand.

This book does not deal with one or two individuals but dozens, if not hundreds, who witnessed the incident. And what makes it fascinating is that the closer you get to the subject matter, the more evidence you uncover. This does not hold true in some of the more celebrated UFO cases, where the evidence and witnesses seem to melt away when serious investigative practices are applied.

Chris Styles has done an admirable job of digging out the evidence, separating the speculative from the hard testimony, and tracking down witnesses long gone from the area. This kind of research runs up telephone and travel expenses at an alarming rate, as I can testify to with my own credit card receipts, and there is no hope of compensation except for a sense of personal satisfaction. Chris has managed to accomplish a great deal of research, despite his own limited financial resources, as this book will show.

Now I find the same thing happening to me. The more I dig into this thing the more I discover. When I uncover witnesses they put me in touch with others who were involved or affected in one way or another.

This incident is probably the best documented of all of the UFO crashes to date and that is its strength. The government documents and private testimony that have been gathered can leave no doubt in the reader's mind that this event was real.

And there is a dark side to it, too, with chilling overtones. This may be why the military referred to this artifact as the "Dark Object."

Don Ledger Bedford,
Nova Scotia

CHAPTER ONE

THE BEGINNING

Every journey has a beginning. This book was begun during a 1995 trip with Chris Styles in his Chevy Blazer.

I met Chris after I joined the UFO organization MUFON earlier that year, after reading countless books about the phenomenon. MUFON put me in touch with Chris, who was then the assistant provincial director in Nova Scotia.

Chris brought up the subject of Shag Harbor during our first meeting. His enthusiasm for the case was infectious, and over the next few months I found myself being drawn into the investigation.

On this sunny day in 1995 I had accompanied Chris to a meeting with the president of Canadian Seabed Research in Porter's Lake, Nova Scotia. I went along as an interested party, and as a possible member of an underwater survey team in Shag Harbor, Nova Scotia, the next summer.

There was also another reason, one of convenience. In the weeks prior to this trip, as a fledgling Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) investigator, I had been looking into a UFO sighting by two fourteen-year-

old girls one year earlier, on the thirteenth of April, 1994. At the time the sighting had received some attention by the local press and electronic media. One of the girls lived in a suburb of Dartmouth known as Cole Harbor, a community in the same general area as Porter's Lake.

During the initial investigation I didn't have my camera with me, and I wanted to photograph the area and get an idea of the location of the sighting. Since the area in question would be just a little out of our way, I asked Chris the night before if he would mind going there on our return trip, and of course he agreed.

After the meeting, we arrived at the sighting location around three-thirty in the afternoon. The area was new to Chris. While I took some pictures, he looked around. It was while I had the camera to my eye that he noticed that I was not the only person photographing this spot. There was another car, a black unmarked Nissan, parked farther down the road in this sparsely populated location. Chris observed a man with a camera shooting in our direction, either at us or at the wooded area I was photographing. I glanced toward the vehicle too late to see the other photographer. "Probably a real estate agent," I suggested. "There's a lot of land around here for sale." I continued snapping pictures.

The car started and proceeded up the road in our direction. By this time I was busy nailing down a compass bearing. The Nissan passed us and turned left around a corner. The road ended there, and there was only cleared land, with forest after that.

"Hey! GRC!" Chris exclaimed. He was referring to the Gendarmerie Royale du Canada, otherwise known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or "Mounties."

"What?" I asked, looking up from my compass.

"Those guys had GRC shoulder patches on their jackets. I saw them when they went by us."

"Are you sure?" I asked. I watched as the vehicle continued down the road to our left, eventually disappearing behind some trees in the thickly wooded area.

"Saw them as plain as day," Chris said. "They weren't more than ten feet away when they went by."

"Why would they be photographing the same area as me?" I was puzzled. "I'm sure they would have done all of that stuff last year, when the UFO was reported, if they were even interested then."

"Could be they were taking pictures of us."

"Us ... why us?" I was frankly shocked by his suggestion.

"Beats the hell out of me. But I'm less and less surprised by the things that happen in this field, as I get further into it."

"Bull!" I snorted. I wasn't ready to buy into that yet.

We got back into the truck and began the drive back to the city. Chris continued talking, relating some of his own experiences of odd coincidences that had occurred since he had become involved with the incident of the Dark Object. It was then that he said he was considering writing a book about his

adventures, if he could find someone to help him. I mentioned that I did some writing, mostly on aviation-related subjects. We agreed that we would talk about the idea over coffee later in the week, and continued the drive back to the city.

My thoughts went back to the road in Cole Harbor and the GRC shoulder patches. I wondered then if they had taken my picture and if so, why.

One evening when I was twelve years old, I sat in my bedroom listening to the radio and practicing my guitar, thinking perhaps someday I would be the lead guitar in a famous rock band. Soon the rock music ended and I switched off the radio. It was 10:00 P.M., and I could hear my parents moving around downstairs.

My house was on a corner, halfway up a hill in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. My room was upstairs, in the back of the house, with a view of one of the world's best natural harbors, Halifax Harbor. Bored, I looked out my window, down toward the mouth of the harbor. It was dark now, early in the fall of the year. Lights ringed the harbor and drifted along the water on ships and boats.

One light grabbed my immediate attention. It was a round object, glowing orange, the color of iron heated in a forge. It was much bigger than the others, and was drifting up the harbor toward me. I knew at once that this was no ordinary buoy or running light. There was something both familiar and foreign about it.

Although reluctant to lose sight of it, I wanted to get a better look, so I dashed into an unused bedroom, grabbed my grandfather's old field glasses from a shelf in the closet, and ran back to my room.

My hands shook as I tried to focus the binoculars on the orange disc. I could see no form behind the orange hue. It grew larger as it drew closer but I realized I was going to lose sight of it behind the buildings along the water's edge.

An urgency gripped me. I had to see more.

In desperation I threw open the door to my room and ran recklessly down the stairs. When I reached the front door, I yelled to my parents that I had to get something at the store. I heard my father call after me, telling me to get back in the house in a commanding tone of voice. At any other time this would have stopped me short, but not now. An overpowering curiosity had taken hold of me, and there was no time to explain. I ran through the door, rounded the corner, and was soon running down Pinehill Street as fast as I could.

I reached Prince Albert Road, turned right past St. James Church, and darted down the shallow grade of Canal Street. Over the top of the Mayflower Club I could see the object drifting closer to my end of the harbor.

A whirl of emotions coursed through me. First among them was fascination mixed with fear. Something inside, my own common sense, was telling me to turn back. But the sense of wonder overcame all that. I ran through a vacant lot, my sneakers crunching on gravel, taking a shortcut over to the next street.

Breathlessly I came up from behind the last of a row of warehouses and onto a deserted street that

terminated at the railroad tracks. There I stopped short, out of breath, sucking in large gulps of air.

It was there, drifting toward me noiselessly from my right, just above the water's surface. It was an opaque featureless ball that glowed a dull orange. Up until then I hadn't realized how big it was - it was easily fifty or sixty feet in diameter.

I stood rooted to the spot, fascinated, though now apprehensive. Twelve-year-old bravado was being replaced with twelve-year-old imagination. Suddenly I wondered, was this coming for me? Did it know I was here? Should I run and risk attracting its attention, or stay put, hoping it would pass me by? Or did its occupants even care about the presence of a young boy?

Closer inshore it came, tracing the shoreline, almost abreast of me, seventy-five or a hundred feet away. I stayed put, watching it, wondering if it was watching me. Were there beings in there who could see me, or was it some kind of probe?

Now it was in front of me. I looked around. Was anyone else seeing this? After all, this was not an unpopulated area. Thousands of people lived nearby in the houses and apartment buildings that overlooked the harbor. To my left, three or four hundred yards away, were the Department of Transport offices and the docks, with coast guard vessels tied alongside.

Excitement and the cool fall air made me shiver. I was overwhelmed by what I was seeing. All of my instincts told me it was not natural, not fashioned by human hands, not humanly controlled. It drifted across in front of me to my left, turning with the bend of the cove and gliding silently along toward the coast guard complex.

I had been glued to the spot, but now my nerve broke. I turned and ran home as fast as I could, my heart pounding with fear. I kept looking back to make sure that this thing was not following me. I was elated and perhaps a little disappointed that it didn't follow me home.

Finally I reached the house. Now I had to deal with my father's wrath. My story fell on deaf ears. He either did not believe or was unable to accept what his son had witnessed.

I went to my room and again looked out of the window and down the harbor, but the object was no longer there. I sat on the edge of my bed, wondering. The next day the radio reported many calls from around the harbor area, telling about the strange glowing orange ball out on the water the night before. Back then I had no way of knowing how this sighting was going to affect my future and how it would draw me into the world of UFO phenomena. Nor did I suspect that the fascinating events that were unfolding that evening of October 4, 1967, would culminate in an incident, in a little fishing village on the south coast of Nova Scotia, that would profoundly affect me and the lives of so many others.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NIGHT OF THE UFOs

October 4, 1967, 7:19 P.M. Atlantic daylight time
Douglas DC-8,Air Canada Flight 305
On Victor 300, level at 12,000 feet
Between Sherbrooke and St Jean VOR
Southeastern Quebec

Captain Pierre Guy Charbonneau relaxed in his seat in the cockpit, his eyes scanning the instruments on the panel before him. He took comfort from them, their dials dimly lit by red lights to protect his night vision. Each was reading exactly what it should be reading. He was on an IFR (instrument flight rules) flight plan and could have flown the entire trip keeping his eyes inside the cabin, trusting in these very instruments.

The slipstream whispered by the windscreen of the DC-8 at 256 knots. Everything seemed in order. The first officer, Robert Ralph, was beside him.

He allowed his gaze to wander outside the cockpit to the crisp, clear, and starry night sky. It was a good night for flying, with only a thin wispy cloud layer just below their altitude of twelve thousand feet. He glanced out of the window near his left shoulder, looking to the south.

What he saw there made him sit up straighter in his seat. A well-lit, large, orange rectangular object, followed by a string of smaller lights, like the tail on a kite, was tracking parallel to their course at their altitude about twenty degrees above the horizon. The brightly lit object appeared to be huge.

Captain Charbonneau immediately drew it to the attention of his first officer, Ralph. It was standard practice to alert each other about any other traffic in their vicinity. But this was something different, and they speculated about what it might be. Neither had ever seen anything like it before.

Suddenly, at 1919 hours ADT, there was a sizable explosion near the larger object. They watched in amazement while this explosion turned into a big white ball-shaped cloud that quickly turned red in color, then violet, and then blue. The captain planted his feet on the rudder pedals and gripped the control yoke, ready to override the autopilot and take control if necessary.

Two minutes later, at 1921 hours, there was another apparent explosion that turned into a second sphere, which was orange in color. This was bigger and higher up than the other but like the first, it, too, eventually faded to blue. The smaller lights on the "kite tail" broke formation with the rectangular object and began to dance around the spheres like fireflies.

The captain let out his breath, realizing he had been holding it for some time. His first instinct was to insure control of the aircraft, checking airspeed, altitude, and course, but the autopilot was doing its job properly.

The captain and first officer kept an eye on the light show in the air for several more minutes, watching as the second pear-shaped cloud, glowing pale blue, drifted eastward. "What did you make of that?" Ralph asked. They had been speculating as to what the object was during the sighting.

The captain shook his head with a puzzled expression. "I can honestly say I've never seen anything like

that before."

"Do you suppose it could have been some type of military aircraft?" Ralph asked. "Maybe it was something they were testing out of Loring Air Force Base in Maine. That's not too far southeast of here."

Again Captain Charbonneau had to plead ignorance. "Your guess is as good as mine, son."

The first officer paused for a moment, then asked the question that hung in the air between them. Somebody had to bring it up.

"Should we file a report on this?"

The captain glanced over his left shoulder to the now empty sky to the south. Weird, he thought. He pursed his lips, turning his attention back to his instruments while he mulled over that question. It was an important one for both of them. For a moment Ralph thought he hadn't been heard, but finally the captain answered.

"Yeah, I think we should, don't you - something that close?"

Ralph shrugged. "You're the boss. What should I say?"

"Just tell them what you saw."

The first officer thought this over. What had he actually seen? Like most professional pilots he was reluctant to discuss, admit to, or report a UFO for fear of being ridiculed or, worse, having it affect his career. And there was another reason, a regulation being enforced by the Canadian government of which few civilians were aware. It was a regulation that stemmed from an agreement between Canada and the United States that restricted the divulging of UFO reports beyond the guidelines set forth in and stemming from the JANAP 146 (d) agreement of 1962.

Although the guidelines were extensive, essentially they restricted the reporting of UFOs by military and airline pilots, requiring them to report their sightings to the authorities only. They were not to report them to civilian agencies, the press, or anyone else, under penalties that could result in a fine often thousand dollars and a prison term of up to ten years. Ralph voiced this concern.

"My advice is just to write down what you saw. Give only the facts. I'll do the same. We can request anonymity from the company and have them pass it on." That seemed to cheer up the first officer. "Yeah, maybe that would be the best way to go." Despite his concerns First Officer Ralph wrote up a fairly comprehensive report (as did his captain) with noted times and drawings. He did this despite the fact that at the time he was in training to become a captain with Air Canada.

7:51 P.M. ADT
Eastern Passage, Nova Scot/a
Outskirts of Canadian Naval Air Station, Shearwater
William Thibeault and his brother were set up for stargazing on William's front lawn using a surveyor's

transit as a telescope. Both brothers were familiar with the various conditions of the sky. William was an employee of Fairey of Canada Limited, a subsidiary of Fairey Aircraft in England, the company responsible for the design of many modern aircraft.

It was a cool but clear evening with no moon, nearly perfect conditions for viewing the sky. Just across the harbor and about one and a half miles to the southwest of them was Halifax, the capital city of Nova Scotia, with its waterfront and office buildings all lit up, but there was not enough backscatter to interfere with their sky watching. They noted a layer of cloud at twelve thousand feet and soon noticed something else even higher. They saw two dim white lights followed by a brighter white light, all moving slowly in a northeast to southwest direction. This course would take them down the coastline of Nova Scotia, over towns and villages, in the direction of Shag Harbor.

The two brothers watched the mysterious lights for about five minutes, as they transited the nearly clear night sky, and speculated about what they might be. They excitedly reported them to the Naval Air Station at seven minutes after eight. When asked by the commanding officer at the base in Shearwater for an estimate of their height, William gave an estimate of fifty to one hundred thousand feet.

When asked what they appeared to be, he replied that he didn't know, but he was certain that they were not aircraft.

9:00 PM. ADT
Aboard the MV Nickerson
32 Nautical Miles south of Sambro, Nova Scotia

Captain Leo Mersey's patience was wearing thin. He turned to the first mate. "Let's get these men below." He didn't like it when the men behaved like kids. "This is a fishing dragger, not a cruise liner."

With the 9rew, numbering eighteen, crowding the ship's rails, there was danger of one of them falling overboard, especially when they were excited like this.

"I want someone to answer when I call below."

"Aye, Captain. Come on, boys, you heard the captain." The first mate followed the men back to their posts and their bunks. When he was assured that all was in order, he made his way back to the wheelhouse.

Captain Mersey was looking at the screen on the Decca radar. The mate and the captain had a good working relationship and he could be less formal when they were away from the men.

"Are they still painting targets on the scope, Leo?"

Mersey turned to him. "Yeah. All four of them. Looks like they're holding their position about sixteen miles northeast of ours."

"They're real, then. What the hell do you think they are?"

The captain looked off to the northeast, where they could see four brilliant red lights that appeared to be on or just above the water. They were spaced out in a box formation, about six miles on a side.

"They're real and solid enough if the radar is painting them. As to what they are, it beats me. The navy does exercises in that area, but I never saw anything like this before. In fact I can say I never saw anything that red before."

Occasionally one of the red lights would flare up to such an intensity that it would leave an afterimage when they averted their gaze. It was an astonishing effect. "Maybe it's some kind of flare the navy is trying out, Leo. They don't always give us warnings."

Mersey shook his head. "No. When you were on the foredeck with the crew, I radioed into RCC and the harbormaster in Halifax. They don't have exercises on tonight. Besides, the radar paints them as being pretty substantial. It wouldn't show flares and they don't stay up there like that."

He squinted his eyes as one of the lights flared up again. "There's something there, all right, and I'm content to keep my distance."

They were interrupted when one of the younger hands knocked on the door of the wheelhouse and entered. "Sir, I thought you might like to know something I just heard on the multiband radio."

Mersey cocked his head. "What is it, son?"

"Well, things sound pretty crazy on the mainland. I guess the Mounties are getting complaints about UFOs from all over. It's really thick from Halifax to Yarmouth."

Mersey nodded and looked again at the lights. He turned back to the crew member. "Thanks, son. Let me know if you hear anything solid." He considered telling the youth to keep it to himself, but thought better of it. Despite the workload on a dragger, there was always time to talk, and telling him that would only encourage him.

"Leo, have a look at this!" Mersey's attention was immediately drawn back to the lights by the urgency in his first mate's voice. It was not like him to show excitement so plainly.

One of the red lights was climbing upward, arcing toward them. It passed directly over the ship at what Leo guessed was over a mile up and continued toward the horizon.

The pair stared in silence for a moment, the only sounds coming from the creaks and groans of the dragger's gentle rolling in a long sea swell. This was soon shattered by the ship's radio.

"MV Nickerson, MV Nickerson, MV Nickerson, this is Coast Guard Radio Halifax, Coast Guard Radio Halifax, over."

Mersey started in spite of himself. He grabbed the microphone, thumbing the switch.

"Coast Guard Radio Halifax, this is MV Nickerson. Go ahead."

"MV Nickerson, I have a message for Captain Leo Mersey. Over."

"This is Captain Mersey, over."

"Captain, I have a message from RCMP Headquarters in Halifax. It requests that you report to their detachment in Lunenburg when you finish your trip. They would like a report on your sighting. Over."

The captain affirmed that he would do so and ended his transmission.

"It seems, Leo," the first mate said, "that someone was listening in on your transmissions to RCC and the queen's harbormaster in Halifax."

The captain muttered his agreement. He seemed lost in thought.

Water Street, Halifax
10:00P.M.ADT

The glowing orange-colored fireball caught the , woman's attention from the Halifax side of the harbor in the capital city. She watched from her position near the ferry wharf, fascinated by the orb's effortless passage from the east side of the harbor to the boat slips. Minutes later, at home, she watched it for several minutes through a pair of binoculars. The object drifted into Dartmouth Cove, curved back toward the coast guard pier, then went southeast toward the Imperial Oil refinery. At that point she lost track of the sphere.

The woman called a local radio station and reported her sighting in an excited voice. She described it as an object about forty to fifty feet in diameter, glowing orange, the color of a red-hot poker. She didn't leave her name.

Not long after, the station received another call confirming the first caller's description. They would get many such calls that night, as did the local newspaper, The Halifax Chronicle Herald.

While the woman was watching the object, a mile away, across the water, young Chris Styles watched the same object, unaware that he was not the only one who saw it.

Somewhere between 10:30 and 11:00 P.M. ADT Mason's Beach in Puffy Cup Cove Lunenburg Village, Nova Scotia

Will C. Eisnor is a professional photographer and owner of Knickle's Studio in Lunenburg, a lovely little fishing port. On the evening of October 4, 1967, one of his schooners was about to have her life ended forever. His forty-year-old, thirty-foot sailboat was in such bad shape that she was beyond repair. He had pulled her close to shore and as high up on Mason's Beach during high tide as possible. Will and two of his friends, Raymond Hiltz and St. Clair Croft, spent some time placing fuel aboard the vessel so that they could destroy her by fire.

They had chosen a good night for a big fire, a cool evening with no wind. There was no moon, but the sky was filled with stars. Little wavelets lapped up on the shore while the tide first ebbed, then began to flow back in.

Burning the craft was not to be as easy as they had anticipated; inside and out her planks and timbers

were sweetened by years of being submerged in the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. They made many trips up and down the beach, bringing back armloads of driftwood to add to the fire, trying to dry the vessel's structure enough for it to burn on its own.

It was during one of these trips down the beach that Will noticed some lights in the night sky to the west. They stood out against the star field and were very arresting. He stared at them for a while, trying to figure out what they might be. They were too bright and too colorful to be stars, and they appeared to be suspended, motionless, over a ridge covered with spruce trees, although the photographer suspected that they were farther away than that.

There were three lights, arranged in a tilted triangle. There was an amber light at the bottom right of the triangle, a brilliant blue light at the apex, and what looked like a spear of amber light to the rear on the remaining corner. For the life of him he could not imagine what it might be. There was no sound coming from it. Instinctively he knew this had to be some strange, unknown phenomenon. He wondered how long it had been there.

He returned to the boat and mentioned it to his friends, but they did not act very interested. Will insisted that they come farther down the beach and have a look since it was impossible to view the lights when they were near the fire, because of the glare.

The lights were still hanging there when he pointed them out. One of his friends said, "Oh yeah, I see them." But the other thought it was probably a helicopter or maybe a tower with a light on top.

Will was used to studying things through his trained photographer's eye and this was interesting enough to photograph. He had a camera in his car, a Pentax loaded with slide film. He retrieved it and, walking some distance from the fire, looked for a rock to place it on, because he figured the lights would require a time exposure and he didn't have a tripod with him.

He had another problem as well. The Pentax had no built-in timer and was usually triggered by a squeeze bulb for time exposures. The only other alternative was to hold the shutter release button down with his finger, but this was risky because he planned to expose the image for a few minutes and would certainly shake the camera during such a lengthy period. He placed the Pentax on a rock, lined it up as best he could, placed a small rock on the shutter release, then left it there.

When Will returned about five minutes later and stopped the exposure, the lights were still hanging in the same position in the sky. He watched them for several more minutes, then went back to the fire. When he looked for them again a short time afterward, they had disappeared. The lights had remained in the same position in the sky for over fifteen minutes.

When the slides were developed, he examined the lights once more, pleased with the clarity of the pictures. He placed them in a safe place along with several thousand other slides he had taken, and forgot about them for many years.

11:00 – 11:30 P.M. ADT
Herring seiner fleet
Northwest of Brier Island and Digby Neck, Nova Scotia

Walter Titus was the master of the Quadra Isle, a herring seiner and part of a fleet of some fourteen or fifteen vessels plying the waters to the northeast of Digby Neck, Nova Scotia. The neck is a long thin finger of land, stretching out about thirty-four miles into the bay.

On the night in question the fishing fleet was strung out along the Digby Neck like a necklace of lights, chasing the herring up the Bay of Fundy. At night from the air or the water these fleets are a sight to behold. The very nature of their operation depends on many high-wattage floodlights that light up the area like a small city. It might have been this spectacle of lights, shining so late into the night, that attracted the attention of a visitor of a kind the one hundred and fifty fishermen had never seen before.

Walter Titus first noticed something was wrong when his crew stopped what they were doing and started watching something in the sky to the southeast. Before he could shout to them to get back to work, his own attention was arrested by the antics of a brilliant white light in the sky. He immediately discounted the sight as anything of a normal nature. Like his crew he was fascinated by what was happening in the sky.

The night sky was perfect for viewing, clear but with no moon and festooned with stars. The light he was watching was about the size of the moon and proceeded to give off three brilliant yellow lights that formed a triangle around the larger light. The lights slid effortlessly across the sky, then back again at great speed.

Walter picked up the microphone on his marine band radio to call one of the other vessels close by and ask if they were seeing these things, then noticed that the radio was alive with excited talk about the objects in the sky. It became evident to the skipper that the whole fleet had stopped to watch the sky, and little work was being done. Down on the deck Walter's son Bradford remembers seeing the objects far to the south, diving toward the water.

Apparently some of those aboard the fishing boats felt threatened by the lights. The Lent family, including Mr. and Mrs. Lent and their three sons, ages thirteen to nineteen, were watching this show of UFOs from the shore with a few of their friends, using 7 x 50 binoculars, while listening in on the marine radio. Their next door neighbor, Albert Welch, was also watching with another pair of binoculars. One of the boats just off the coast of the island feared being crashed into, the Lents reported, and they overheard the fishermen say that the objects had four lights, each on some sort of an extension, each one flashing on and off.

Aboard the Quadra Isle the skipper heard an old friend of his, owner of his own boat, talking on the marine radio. The friend's name was Burton Small and his vessel was part of the armada of fishing vessels off Digby Neck that night. He was listening to his marine radio, and when he heard all the UFO talk, he went outside on the bridge of his boat with a pair of powerful binoculars that he had been issued during the Second World War. It was not long before he spotted the source of all of the excitement.

On the Quadra Isle Walter Titus heard Burton Small say to anyone listening on the marine band, "I wish you boys could see what I can make out with my binoculars." But he never explained exactly what it was that he saw. Walter always intended to ask Burton what he meant by that statement, but he never got around to it.

After observing the aerial display for about five or six minutes, Walter watched the lights depart to the

southeast. To this day the memory of that brief encounter is still fresh in his mind.

As for his son, Bradford Titus, he would see another light later, during another encounter, blood red and streaking across the sky from horizon to horizon in seconds. Like his father he never forgot the sight.

11:00 – 11:10 P.M. ADT
Arthur Lake on Highway 304
Five miles southwest of Weymouth, Nora Scotia

Royal Mounted Police Constable Ian Andrew and game wardens Bert Green, Don Brown, and Sonny Wagner were on a stakeout in the forest near Arthur Lake. Earlier in the evening of October 4 they had driven into the woods to set up a watch station where they could observe trails and logging roads that were being used by deer poachers.

The night was cool and clear, and since these men were veterans at this job, they had come prepared with extra clothing, thermoses of hot coffee, and sandwiches. They staked out an area on the edge of a large clearing, overlooking some trails that they thought might produce results, and prepared for a long night. It was not uncommon for these stakeouts to go on into the early hours of the morning. They clipped off small branches that might obscure their view and used them as camouflage to conceal their location. They had their vehicle as a backup in case it got really cold.

The night was cool, about forty-five degrees Fahrenheit. There was no moon, but the sky was filled with stars that, although they were brilliant, offered little in the way of light. It was a good night for poaching. They waited, watched, but mostly they listened.

They listened for the sounds of distant vehicles that might be making their way up the old logging trails and roads to their position. They listened to the porcupines, skunks, and weasels rustling through the dead leaves that carpeted the floor of the forest at this time of year. These dead leaves acted as a natural warning system for deer, since they were difficult to walk through quietly. Hunters described it as like walking on Kellogg's Corn Flakes.

Contrary to popular belief the forest at night is anything but quiet. Even the deer themselves can be noisy as they travel through the woods. Owls and loons called out and the trees creaked with the slightest breeze.

The Mountie and the game wardens muttered to one another from time to time, swapping stories of earlier experiences, pausing occasionally to listen in the direction of some new sound. Constable Andrew used a small keychain flashlight and carefully checked the time. It was just before 11:00 P.M.

"Doesn't look like we're going to see much action tonight," he whispered.

"Could be the others will have more success farther south," Bert replied. As if to confirm that theory they heard a distant rifle report to the south.

They had gotten back in their vehicle by then. "Sounds as if you might be right," Don whispered back.

"It's cooler than I thought it would be too."

The four of them whispered among themselves for a few moments. They had rolled down the windows so they would be able to hear better.

Gradually their conversation faded away, and they realized they were all staring at something through the windshield.

Finally Ian broke the silence. "What the hell is that?" he asked. He opened his door and got out of the car.

Bert, looking up as well, saw an orange-colored light, like a glowing ball of fire, south of them and just above the tree line, moving silently but slowly across the star field. There were spark-like objects emanating from it but there was no sound. "Do you see that?" he asked.

"Yeah, I see it. What is it? Is it an airliner?"

"If it is, it's the quietest airliner I've ever seen. Besides, it doesn't look right." Constable Andrew saw it as a candle-flame-shaped object but it looked as though the flame was upside down. He, too, remembers sparks and a corona around the object.

They watched for a few moments, standing on the logging road in silence as the object slid across the night sky, at what the Mountie guessed was a low altitude of about two to three hundred feet. Bert pulled a compass from his pocket and took a bearing. The object glittered and sparkled and then finally disappeared over the tree line at the south end of the clearing.

They spent the rest of their watch wondering what it could have been. When asked why he had not filed a report later, when he returned to his post, Ian Andrew explained that in those days, when they filed reports on UFOs, there was a tremendous amount of paperwork, with three different reports required by RCMP headquarters, the Air Desk in Ottawa, and the National Research Council. His caseload was heavy enough without adding to it. But the event impressed him enough that he could remember the details of it clearly twenty-nine years later.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SHAG HARBOR INCIDENT

Wednesday, October 4, 1967, approximately 11:20 PM.
Atlantic daylight time
Highway 3, Lower Woods Harbor
Half mile west of Shag Harbor, Nova Scotia

The Dark Object now rocked gently on the salt waters of the southern passage. It drifted with the ebb tide, slowly, intelligently, toward the south end of the sound, and the deeper waters of the North Atlantic. It formed a dark silhouette in contrast to the warm glow of the lighted houses on shore.